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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 001236

SIPDIS

STATE FOR R, P, AF/S - HTREGER AND AF/PD - LMING

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TAGS: [EAID](#) [KDEM](#) [KPAO](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KMPI](#)

SUBJECT: MOZAMBIQUE: COMBATING EXTREMISM

REF: A. SECSTATE 159129

[1](#)B. MAPUTO 836

[1](#)C. MAPUTO 1045

[1](#)D. MAPUTO 1112

[1](#)E. MAPUTO 1160

Classified By: AMB LA LIME. REASONS: 1.4(B) AND (D)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. Mozambique presents unique opportunities in the Global War on Terrorism, as its significant Muslim-minority community remains moderate and open to cooperation, discussion and exchange with the U.S. and Mission elements. In the past year, Post has successfully expanded its outreach efforts, focusing on (a) initiating a dialogue and establishing relationships within the Islamic community and (b) sharing and explaining American values and messages. END SUMMARY.

RELIGIOUS OUTREACH WORKING GROUP

[1](#)2. (U) In October 2004, the Ambassador established an interagency Religious Outreach Working Group chaired by the Public Diplomacy Officer and including elements from across the Mission, most notably a cadre of Muslim locally employed staff (LES). The group was charged with organizing the first-ever Iftar at the Ambassador's residence. Teams from the group, including at least one American and one LES, met personally with each of the invitees prior to the event so that the effort could be put into an appropriate contextual framework and personal relationships could be established. The group also coordinated the delivery of gift baskets to ten mosques in poorer neighborhoods as a "zakat" offering from the Embassy. As the results described below indicate, Post's Ramadan initiatives have had tremendous success at establishing relationships between the Islamic and American communities in Mozambique. The country's leading Imam, Sheikh Aminudin Mohamed, gave impromptu remarks at the Iftar thanking the Ambassador for the initiative and her steps to build a bridge between the two communities.

MISSION SPEAKERS INITIATIVE

[1](#)3. (U) The Ambassador's Mission Speakers Initiative (MSI) sends teams of Mission personnel to speak at area secondary schools. During the past year, it has directly reached over 1,000 high school students at 12 high schools. Several months after the Iftar, as part of the MSI, the Ambassador and PAO, accompanied by an American Muslim, visited the Hamza Institute, an Islamic school run by Sheikh Mohamed. Prior to the Iftar, Post had been unable to schedule a speaking program at an Islamic school. The Ambassador fielded questions from Islamic students on the entire gamut of American foreign policy. Both the Ambassador and the PAO appeared on Islamic radio immediately after the event. The presence of an American Muslim at the event helped connect with the students.

INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM

[1](#)4. (U) Three International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) nominees were identified from the Ramadan outreach efforts, including a prominent Muslim journalist and two leading Imams. After one of the Imam's return from his program entitled "Religion and the Community," he agreed to appear on local Islamic radio with the PAO to answer questions about America. He then agreed to speak about Islam in America at a roundtable hosted by the Public Affairs Section. The direct audience of forty included several influential Muslims as well as young Muslim scholars, and the presentation was broadcast live by Islamic radio, reaching perhaps an audience of 15,000. The Imam's presentation was a hit. He spoke warmly and openly about his program, underscoring that he witnessed a highly religious nation, pluralistic and respectful of faiths, regardless of tradition or practice. He was impressed by Americans' rights of freedom of speech and expression, commenting on protests he saw against President Bush and the Iraq conflict. In addition to the radio broadcast, the Imam's program received coverage in several publications. It also prompted a three-page analysis of Islam and the West in an influential weekly.

[1](#)5. (U) The IVLP also demonstrated its long-term success when IVLP alumnus and Muslim journalist Jafar Buana wrote an op-ed in the Nampula-based weekly Lurio entitled "Is America to Blame for Everything?" The fact that much of Mozambique's Muslim population lives in the Nampula area magnifies the importance of this article. In it, Buana chided both his readers and civic leaders around the world for blaming America for all the world's ills, arguing that "America extends its hand to us in almost every way."

ENGLISH ACCESS MICROSCHOLARSHIPS

16. (U) Post has launched its English Access Microscholarship Program in Nampula, which is situated in the predominately Muslim northern reaches of Mozambique and is the country's third largest city and a center for commerce and industry. The program is key to expanding the Muslim outreach efforts across Mozambique, as great care was taken to include an American element in the program. The classes will be taught by an American and use American educational materials and include visits to the American Corner at Mussa Bin Bique University. Post anticipates that this program will grow quickly from its current allotment of sixteen students and be a primary vehicle for exchange in the underserved North of Mozambique.

EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS

17. (U) Although USAID is not directly targeting the Muslim community, Mozambican Muslims are likely beneficiaries of all USAID programs. These include projects to increase rural incomes and labor-intensive exports, to improve the quality and accessibility of basic health care, and to strengthen governance at the municipal level. USAID is also filling a key role along with other USG agencies in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief to reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and care for persons infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. USAID's activities are implemented primarily in central and northern Mozambique, examples of which include: the delivery of business development services (e.g., training in marketing and management) to farmers' associations and rural enterprises; expansion of the tertiary road network throughout the Nacala corridor; the promotion of tourism in three provinces - Cabo Delgado, Niassa, and Nampula; work at the community and district level to increase access to and demand for proven and effective primary health care services, including child survival and reproductive health; and building good democratic governance at the municipal level by strengthening the capacity of local administration, improving transparency in municipal operations, and creating opportunities for citizens to participate in local decision-making and community management. At the national level, USAID is implementing anti-corruption activities with the GRM's Anti-Corruption Unit and a prominent Mozambican NGO, as well as policy reform efforts in all sectors including reforms to improve the business environment. USAID is also offering to all qualified Mozambicans a limited number of scholarships for undergraduate and graduate study in Mozambique, the U.S. and third countries.

GRM ACTIVITIES AND ACTION

17. (U) Due to limited institutional capacity and its lack of perceiving a threat from Islamic extremists, the GRM has done little to combat extremism but remains open to cooperation in connection with USG programs.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

18. (U) Post's Religious Outreach Working Group is already planning to expand this year's Ramadan efforts. Other officers at Post have volunteered to host Iftars, permitting this direct outreach event to reach dozens of other prominent figures in the Mozambican Muslim community. Post is also exploring the option of hosting an Iftar in the Northern parts of the country, where outreach is difficult due to resource constraints. The Public Affairs Section will also host Ramadan outreach events, including an additional roundtable by an IVLP alumnus and inviting a local Imam to give a lecture on "Islam in Mozambique" to an American audience. By reversing roles and inviting the Islamic community to teach the American community, Post hopes to strengthen already expanding ties between the two.

19. (C) COMMENT. Post has achieved great successes through its Religious Outreach Working Group but has also encountered some difficulties. These include: lack of sufficient human and financial resources to do meaningful outreach upcountry; lack of resources and mechanisms to take full advantage of opportunities that arise to support targeted groups with grants or other outreach; and lack of Portuguese language IVLP projects. Post anticipates that with increased programmatic and human resources, it would be able to substantially increase its outreach activities. END COMMENT.
La Lime